

Greater media concentration does not serve the public interest.

I am writing to comment on the Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcastmedia ownership rules. As I understand it, Congress has charged the FCC with promoting fair competition, diversity and localism in today's media market. Therefore, it is truly mindboggling for FCC Chairman Michael Powell and the other two Republican FCC commissioners to assert that permitting greater concentration of media ownership serves this purpose so central to a well-functioning democracy.

I strongly support retaining all of the current media ownership rules now in question, and I am appalled that Chairman Powell has chosen to ignore substantial public opposition to this change in media policy. By any fair standard, the FCC studies used as evidence supporting the relaxation of existing ownership rules have not received sufficient public scrutiny or discussion.

In the past several weeks, I have learned of the extensive lobbying efforts of FCC commissioners by commercial interests which stand to benefit greatly by the relaxation of these rules. This would not be troubling if Chariman Powell had done more than the absolute minimum to hear the views of ordinary citizens, a clear majority of whom are opposed to this change.

This is a very troubling development, bordering on the Orwellian. The way this significant rule change has been handled by the FCC is fundamentally un-American, and signals a much larger problem with our political process. To the extent that Chairman Powell has brought this problem to widespread public attention and alarm, he perhaps has helped to serve the public interest in a manner he certainly did not intend.

I am confident that other concerned citizens like myself, suddenly awakened to the remarkable degree of influence peddling sanctioned by Chairman Powell and his Republican colleagues at the FCC, will voice their opinions about this issue in ways that are unmistakable, proving them with a critically needed lesson in the basic tenets of democracy.

Sincerely,

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